NUMBER 16 NOVEMBER, 1925

SHL
WITHDRAWN

# HARVARD LIBRARY NOTES

CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED AT THE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

# HARVARD LIBRARY NOTES

NOVEMBER No. 16 1925

MRS. ALEXANDER HAMILTON RICE has again showed her generous interest in the maintenance of the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library building, during the past summer, by having the marble walls and ceilings of the entrance halls, as well as the ceiling of the main Reading Room, cleaned and renovated. The Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Rooms are likewise being thoroughly renovated.

* * *

PROFESSOR MANLY of Chicago has called attention to the fact that the inscription on the back of the old Chaucer portrait in the Treasure Room, which states that the picture had been preserved for many years at Llanshaw Court, Gloucestershire, the seat of the Stokes family, must be a misreading. It undoubtedly should be Stanshaw Court, a place actually in Gloucestershire and belonging to the Stokes family. The present inscription on the portrait is a copy of an earlier inscription now entirely obliterated, although the paper on which it was written remains. The name was evidently misread at a time when the writing had already become difficult to decipher. W. C. L.

* * *

MR. GRENVILLE H. NORCROSS '75 marked the fiftieth anniversary of his class by presenting to the Library a complete equipment of steel cases specially designed to hold the Library's portrait collection.

This collection, comprising over 80,000 portraits, of which the greater part were received in Evert Wendell's bequest, is arranged in six series according to size: (1) the old-fashioned cartes-de-visite and other cards up to 5 x 3 inches, arranged alphabetically in ordinary catalogue trays; (2) the cabinet size, up to $4\frac{1}{2}$ x $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; (3 and 4) what might be called octavos and folios after the nomenclature of books, one on $6\frac{1}{2}$ x $9\frac{1}{2}$ inch mounts, the other on 10 x 14 inch mounts, and both installed as vertical files in the customary filing case units; (5 and 6), the larger plates in portfolios, one series 20 x 24 inches or less, and the other over that size.

All these groups are conveniently disposed in Mr. Norcross's new "All-Steel" cases built for the purpose by the General Fireproofing Company. The cases stand in the second Map Room and will for the future keep safely under lock and key the treasures committed to their care. They also make it possible for us to take up the preparation, mounting and labelling of several thousand additional portraits which have been accumulating for some years.

The collection of portraits is supplemented by collections of cartoons, views and other plates having historical value, and it should be remembered that there is in the Theatre rooms on the third floor a still larger collection of theatrical portraits, probably not less than 200,000 items, separately mounted and arranged. Mrs. Hall, the custodian of the collection, is preparing a catalogue of the *engraved* theatrical portraits, which will in due time be printed. W. C. L.

* * *

Mr. Lane read a paper on Christoph Daniel Ebeling, the Hamburg Librarian whose collection of over 3200 volumes relating to America was given to Harvard by Colonel Israel Thorndike in 1818, at a meeting of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, on October 21.

MR. WINSHIP spoke on 'Aldus and the Aldine printing shop in the year 1508' at the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan on September 23.

* * *

MR. LORD left for Paris on October 15 for a year's study. He will work in the field of Modern European History at the Sorbonne and at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques.

* * *

EARL L. HECK will assist Mr. Briggs, in Mr. Lord's place, during the latter's absence. He is a graduate of 1920 and has had previous experience in the Library as attendant in the Farnsworth Room from 1920 to 1923.

* * *

MRS. HALL has been appointed Custodian of the Theatre collection by the Corporation.

* * *

DR. LEACH, as curator of our Scandinavian books, has made it possible for the Library to utilize for a short time the services of Mr. Brynjulf Lier. Mr. Lier's duties embrace work on the Union Scandinavian list, as well as the cleaning up of the Scandinavian books awaiting treatment. He will assist also in introducing some improvements in the Scandinavian classification groups. He is a native of Oslo, and has studied one year at the New York State Library School.

* * *

THE AUTUMN MONTHS always greet new persons among the classifiers and cataloguers. As such may be counted Miss Jessie M. Whitehead, though she made her appearance among us in July, doing special work with Miss Ayer. Miss Whitehead comes from the School of Librarianship at University College, London, England, and her earlier record includes war service in the British Foreign Office and as a translator in London and Paris. In 1920 she received an appointment on the staff of the

International Relief Credit Committee, and her work included translating for the President of the French Republic. Her services were recognized by the French Government by the decoration of Officier d'Académie. She is devoting her time to cataloguing and work on the Union List of Serials.

Miss Pauline E. Ryder has joined Miss Tucker's staff as a cataloguer. She received her degree of A.B. at Radcliffe last June.

A new name on the list is Mrs. Albert, but we recognize her as the Miss Clifton of last year; she has returned for work on the education collections.

Miss Kimball has been transferred to the Continuation Division, and Miss Adams, Miss Whitehead, and Mr. DeWeese will devote a large portion of their time to the work on the Union Serial List.

Miss Kimball and Mr. DeWeese both carried their library activities over into the vacation period by spending some of their time in procuring material for the Library. The former was successful in gathering a number of schoolbooks, including several interesting Ohio imprints, and the latter brought back useful additions to our file of Kentucky school documents. T. F. C.

* * *

Mr. J. Francis Driscoll of Brookline, who has been for some time a faithful foster-parent to the Library's collection of American sheet music, has secured for it a piece which seems to be an unrecorded first edition of an otherwise unknown Bret Harte item. The title is 'Respectfully dedicated to the Oakland College Boat Club. Row, Boys, Row! The Boat Song, as sung in Formosa, at the California Theatre, by Mr. Lawrence Barrett, Mr. Leach & Chorus. Words by Frank Bret Harte. Music by S.W. Leach. San Francisco: Published by Salvator Rosa 624 Sacramento St. Entered according to Act of Congress, A.D. 1869, by Salvator Rosa, in the Clerk's office of the Dist. Court for the Northern Dist. of Cal.'

Mr. Currier learned during the course of a social call upon Mr. Solberg, Register of Copyrights, at the Congressional Library last April, that amid the vast store of copyright deposits in that library were many unpublished plays in manuscript or typewritten form. Now authorized by a new policy at the Congressional Library of distributing to a certain extent the quantities of books and pamphlets hitherto held strictly as records of copyright, Mr. Solberg, prompted by Mr. Currier's interest in the material, suggested that as many of the plays at hand as would be of value to the Harvard College Library, and could be spared from the Congressional collection, might with the consent of Herbert Putnam, '83, the Librarian, be transferred to Cambridge.

On his return from Washington, Mr. Currier conferred with Mr. Shaw concerning this matter, and arrangements were made for selecting the desirable plays. To this end the services of Mr. Johnson of the Walter H. Baker Company, Boston, were enlisted. Under his direction a list covering the first three letters of the alphabet was drawn. This with a few amendments and the addition of copyright numbers was sent upon the approval of Mr. Lane to Dr. Putnam.

As a result we have already received our first consignment of plays: 20 in number, of which all but one, George M. Cohan's 'Forty-Five Minutes from Broadway,' are unpublished. Among the playwrights represented appear the well-known names of George Arliss, John Kendrick Bangs, Thompson Buchanan, G. H. Broadhurst, George Beban, P. J. Adams, and George M. Cohan. L. A. H.

* * *

The Treasurer has reported four new funds received during the past year for the Library.

Mrs. Richard Albert Pyles gave $1200 for the establishment of a book fund in memory of her son, Captain and Adjutant Albert Zane Pyles, '10, of the 118th Infantry, 30th Division, who was killed in action at Bohain, France, on October 14, 1918.

The Harvard Alumni Association collected $7,704.27 as a part of the commemoration of President Eliot's ninetieth birthday. This was given to the University to found 'the Charles William Eliot Book Fund . . . for the purchase and maintenance of books for the Harvard College Library' on subjects designated by President Eliot, who wrote:

'The general subjects which I should be glad to have represented in the selection of books to be bought with the income of this fund, are as follows:

(a) The History of Education.
(b) The Progress of American Science since 1790.
(c) Democratic Government in the World since the Battle of Magenta.
(d) The Endowment Method for Institutions of Education and Charity in the United States.
(e) Toleration of Religion and Religious Unity in the United States.
(f) Individual Pioneering in regard to Social and Political Problems.

'Knowing the difficulty of observing with precision, over a long period of time, restrictions of a definite or detailed character, especially as regards the purchase of books, I should expect that some latitude would be used in interpreting the scope of each of the subjects specified, and I should also prefer to regard these subjects as suggestive rather than mandatory, for it would seem to me to serve best the general purpose of the Library if the setting forth of these subjects should be taken as a guide to the appropriate authorities in meeting the needs of the Library rather than as a strict limitation on the uses of the income of the fund.'

Payments of $266,000 have been credited to the Library, under the terms of the will of Susan Greene Dexter, who provided that 'I have determined to give the residue of my property to public purposes, and I wish in doing so to devote it to an institution to which my children have been indebted, and I can think of none better than Harvard College, at which both my sons graduated, [Gordon] in the Class of 1887, and [Samuel] in the Class of 1890. I therefore have resolved to give, and I do hereby give, the residue of my estate, real and personal, including all property over which I have a power of testamentary appointment, to the President and Fellows of Harvard College, the income of one moiety to be applied for the purposes of research in bacteriology . . . and the income of the other moiety thereof to be applied to the purchase of books for the library of the University.'

The friends of Professor H. C. G. von Jagemann have contributed a fund of $2000, the income from which is to be used for the purchase of books on Germanic or Romance Philology, to be selected by him.

The sum of $67,500 has been received from the estate of the widow of Professor Nash, to establish the Bennett Hubbard Nash Fund; 'The income thereof to be used and applied in the purchase of such books for the Library of Harvard College in the interest and for the use of the Department of Spanish and Italian.'

Past, present, and future have conflicting claims which the Library administration often finds it hard to harmonize. The present must be served, but the present users are the first to complain bitterly of bygone lapses which deprive them of what they claim as rights, and this is a frequent reminder that they in turn will have successors in the future whose needs and rights must always be kept in mind. The Library of today is the creation of the past, which imposed obligations, restrictions, and desires which should be scrupulously respected, if the current of further benefactions is to bring its steady flow of accessions.

An illustration of this conflict of interests is shown by the books given to Harvard by fishermen. Until 1892, when John Bartlett, who collected books as well as familiar quotations, gave his Waltoniana to the Library, it had scarcely anything of importance on this subject. The 1283 Bartlett books are still a highly creditable collection, of which the Library may well be proud. But they must have felt that they were called upon to play the part of Jonah, a quarter-century later, when Daniel B. Fearing, '81, sent to the newly opened Harry Elkins Widener Memorial building his marvellous assemblage of books relating to every piscatorial subject, in range as in quality a very whale of a collection. It is not altogether easy to maintain the economical administration of all these books, and at the same time conserve the time and the interests of those who wish to examine them, without seeming to submerge the earlier gift in the greater one.

A similar problem arose when the question had to be faced of placing the material relating to Lincoln which was left to Harvard by William W. Nolen, '84. The Library already possessed two very adequate collections of parallel, though by no means identical, books and pamphlets. One of these came as the gift of the family of Alonzo Rothschild, and comprises the material which he brought

together while he was writing his biographical studies of Lincoln. They constitute an admirably comprehensive collection covering every phase of the general field, aside from their personal aspect, and they have the added value for students who are themselves training for literary work of illustrating what a very skilful craftsman found useful in his work. More than this, also, the large number of pamphlets which supplement the bound volumes, includes a goodly proportion of items that are not found elsewhere in the Library. There are likewise many excerpts from out-of-the-way periodicals and ephemeral publications. The Rothschild collection was placed on the shelves of the special History Department room in 1920, where they supplied the best sort of background for the advanced students who assemble there.

The Library's principal Lincoln collection is still the books which stand on the shelves in the stack. This has grown steadily, the start having been made contemporaneously with the events, and in no slight degree through the foresighted help of Edward Everett, President of the University from 1846 to 1849, and actively interested in political affairs until his death in 1865. It became of outstanding importance when the mass of material accumulated by Charles Sumner, '30, throughout his life came to Harvard. Thomas Wentworth Higginson made many contributions of rare pamphlets as well as of items with personal associations. Among the pamphlets of the Evert Wendell bequest were found a surprising number which filled gaps in the collection or which offered unrecorded additional titles. It is still growing through the attentive help of Professor Channing, whose familiarity with what is on the shelves enables him to point out the occasional treasure which is lacking, when opportunities arise.

The addition of the Nolen Lincolniana not only gives the University a permanent memorial to a man whose name must always figure in any detailed account of how

Harvard has educated her graduates, but in its special field it rounds out what was already in the building to virtual completeness. The series of portraits not only shows what the man looked like — or rather how the world at large was led to think that he looked — but this series of pictures in every medium and of every variety of quality, is an epitome of pictorial American art for half a century. The long series of obituary eulogies is, for one thing, material for a study of American printing as it was in 1865, and for another, an amazing revelation of the literary style and oratorical practice at that period. The portfolios full of broadsides, proclamations, fly-sheets, posters and circulars, afford an opportunity to study just how far the current vogue of advertising contains original elements of a fundamental psychological character.

The intelligent generosity of Mrs. Rothschild and of her son, John Rothschild, '19, rendered it possible to make the History Reading Room even more impressively a memorial to the Martyr President. The most significant of the treasures received with the Nolen collection have been placed upon its walls. At the doorway stands a Rogers Group, coming into artistic recognition after a generation whose neglect makes it rare for collectors as well as appreciated by connoisseurs. Within are framed portraits, ranging from artist's proofs to conceptions as primitive as any of the Italians at the Fogg Museum. Interspersed are a famous cartoon by Nast and a Prang lithograph, an enormous election poster of 1860, the Charleston Mercury 'Extra' announcing that 'The Union is Dissolved,' and the broadcasted circular offering a reward of $100,000 for the murderer of the President, 'still at large.' Below, within a glass case, are two life-masks of Lincoln, with other articles associated with him. Other locked cases of drawers are filled with portfolios. Along the walls are the books.

For the present, and until some adequate provision can be made for regular attendance by a custodian or assist-

ant, the room must be closed except to special students. Visitors who wish to see the room can of course always obtain access to it, upon proper application to the Library authorities. But such an arrangement must continue to be unsatisfactory, and a temporary expedient to be put up with for want of the necessary resources. In time this Lincoln Room is sure to have its own foundation, which will keep it open regularly, so that all history students and the occasional visitors as well can have the use of its contents.

## WENDELLIANA

Evert J. Wendell's bequest comprised a very great collection of theatrical memorabilia, a collection of American drama which included many unusual and out-of-the-ordinary items, a considerable number of English and foreign dramatic pieces, and a large assortment of pamphlets and books not of especial intrinsic importance but of the greatest value to this Library because they are precisely the sort of things which most people think the Library will not want. The staff of the Theatre Collection took care of the theatrical portion of the bequest, and the money provided by Mr. Wendell was sufficient to meet the cost of incorporating in the Library the dramatic material, and the larger part of the other books. When this money was used up, there remained a residuum of miscellaneous material, of uncertain value, which could not be handled easily because it required careful examination piece by piece, by some one who was competent to judge the importance of the individual items and assign these to their proper places.

Mrs. Livingston afterwards went through most of the manuscripts, for those of literary value, and other members of the staff have made occasional incursions as leisure or opportunity offered. During the past summer, a more systematic effort to clear away this material has been made

by Mrs. Deakon, who has given her leisure time to this task. The variety of interests aroused is shown by a few items, most of which turned up on a single morning.

Notes for five and ten shillings, issued by the Colony of New York May 31, 1709.

A letter from the Commercial Agent of the United States at Marseilles, 7 January 1804, 'to the Consul for Tripoly now at Leghorn,' in regard to the loss of the Frigate 'Philadelphia' off Tripoli, and Commodore Preble's movements.

A document signed by W. S. Duane, Secretary of the Treasury, releasing Fitz Greene Halleck from certain debts due to the United States, in 1833.

A letter from a war correspondent detailing the circumstances under which Colonel Roosevelt's 'Round Robin' asking for the recall of the Fifth Army Corps was written at Santiago in 1898, accompanying the original draft of the document.

Two packages of telegrams relating to the movements of Confederate forces, in 1861 and 1864.

A parcel of documents relating to the 'Union Artillery' in 1813.

A legal document, probably drawn in 1843, with a note by W. R. Benjamin guaranteeing that it is in the handwriting of Abraham Lincoln.

A broadside containing the text of President John Quincy Adams's Message of December 4, 1827, which is not recorded as being in the Library of Congress. It is in a wrapper addressed and franked in the President's own hand. Among other things, the message states that 'reports are now prepared and will be submitted to Congress . . . on the survey of the Muscle Shoals, in the Tennessee River.'

A sermon and two letters written by the younger Samuel Mather. One is dated from 'My Parlor Fort Edwd. Augt. 27, 1759. 11 oclock P.M.' It reports 'four more French Prisoners catch'd in the woods.' The other was written in London, 1st Novemb. 1777, and implies that letters passed regularly between old and New England, through Rhode Island. 'We often feel for the distresses we are afraid you must suffer by reason of the War. However we hope & pray that Providence will be pleased to put a speedy termination to it & restore Peace to this once so happy Empire . . . Great Britain is abundant in everything that is great & good.'

## SCHOOL BOOKS

Mr. Coolidge has said that our schoolbook collection is an example of zero added to zero no longer making zero. A few years ago we looked with doubtful eyes upon attic scourings which contained nothing but textbooks of the vintages of the '70's and '80's; now we are in a position to welcome such gifts; nay, more, we earnestly invite them, and if their dates reach back to the early nineteenth century, our gratitude becomes positive joy. Now and then we are fortunate enough to receive rare specimens that have survived from the eighteenth century. This Library now has in the process of arrangement, thanks to the generous help of George A. Plimpton, between twelve and fifteen thousand American schoolbooks, and the enthusiasm of those who use them makes us realize the importance of a classified collection of such volumes to the student of educational history and methods.

The beginnings of this collection date back more than twenty years. The new 'Educ T' class was, at that time, looked on by the Library staff, at least, less as a scholar's tool than as a convenient safety valve for those crowded sections of the old Gore Hall stack that embraced American history, linguistics and other plethoric groups. When the books were actually gotten together, and the long series of early issues revealed, their importance was at once recognized, and three years ago when Dean Holmes of the Graduate School of Education procured a special appropriation for putting into order and filling gaps in educational material in this Library, it was suggested that next to the series of school reports the textbooks must be the object of our earnest attention.

At that time Educ T comprised some 3000 volumes, and it was our hope to increase it a bit by pilfering here and there from the stacks. By lucky chance the writer discovered that Miss Taylor, Librarian of the Essex Insti-

tute, and formerly of our staff, was in a house cleaning mood and had a garret filled to overflowing with old schoolbooks. It seemed at first an impossible proposition to ask the Institute to part with these, but encouraged by farseeing members of her board, including Lawrence W. Jenkins, '96, Miss Taylor was empowered to sell the entire collection to the Harvard Library at a price within the means of our limited funds though far below their real value. It was realized by the Institute that the books would be put to constant and important service if transported to Cambridge, but would be consulted only by the occasional student if left at the top of the Salem building. Some 9,000 volumes thus came to us. Since then 700 volumes have been presented by Ginn and Company, 600 purchased from the American Antiquarian Society, and smaller lots have dribbled in.

These books were at first stowed in a disorganized mass in a corner of Floor B of the stack, for it was entirely beyond our resources to attempt to incorporate them into the old Educ T group. Fortunately at this stage, Mr. Plimpton came forward with a goodly check with which to start work on the collection. In order that his name might be more intimately and permanently connected with the books, a portion of his donation was devoted to the purchase price, and a suitable bookplate calls attention to his generosity and identifies the books as having belonged to the Essex collection — an important piece of information, for the study of old textbooks at times requires a knowledge of their place of use.

Under Mrs. Chevalier's care the classification progressed rapidly, and a second subsidy from Mr. Plimpton enabled her to continue the work, which has included the amalgamation of the old Educ T class with the new material. Certain inconveniences in the old classification made it advisable to reorganize the group on a simpler plan, of which the main feature is a strict chronological arrangement under as few classes as possible. At present the

collection is almost wholly made up of American imprints, but such English textbooks as are now in the Library will at once be added, and the scheme of classification permits the inclusion of textbooks of other countries and languages as occasion demands.

Mrs. Chevalier has noted many interesting and some unique items during her work. She has found several Confederate States schoolbooks. One of these is a copy with wall-paper covers of Hassel's 'Deutsches ABC' (Richmond, Va., 1863). Of Cheever's 'Short Introduction to the Latin tongue,' the schoolbook of eighteenth century Boston boys, the Library is fortunate in having the rare first edition of 1709. Another item not frequently seen is John Read's 'Latin Grammar' (Boston, 1736). An Iliad printed in 1672 has on the fly-leaves the signatures of seven Harvard undergraduates between the years 1720 and 1792. But after all, the collection is chiefly notable for its long series of items, no one of which has great individual value but which taken together constitute a vast mine from which can be extracted a complete history of the progress of education in this country. It is hoped that the work of arranging, indexing, and repairing can be carried promptly through to a satisfactory conclusion, thus making the books at once available to the student.

T. F. C.

## THEATRE AND DRAMA

To the student of the English and American stage, Harvard offers a unique opportunity of pursuing original and thoroughgoing investigations in his chosen field — and these investigations may be supplemented under the hospitable roof of the Widener Library by excursions, in some cases far reaching, into the dramatic and stage history of other literatures.

So far as the English and American drama and stage are concerned probably nowhere else does a collection exist

rivalling ours by its mass of books, pamphlets, prints, photographs, playbills and manuscripts; moreover, at Harvard, this material has, to a large extent, been carefully sorted, prepared for use, and indexed. The prints, playbills and rarer books are collected in two rooms on the upper floor of the building with an overflow into an adjoining stack and are under the curatorship of Robert Gould Shaw, of the class of 1869, whose generosity in presenting his own magnificent collection to the Library has made possible our preëminence, and who has ensured future care of the material by the establishment of a special fund. The books and pamphlets, not withdrawn because of rarity, are placed in a near stack. This collection (labelled 'Thr,' and containing 4500 books and pamphlets) is limited to works relating to the English and American stage and drama, to books on stagecraft and playwriting and to comparative and comprehensive treatises; it is particularly rich in early periodicals, biographies and contemporary and controversial publications, and includes books and pamphlets on certain topics allied more or less closely to the legitimate drama, as pageantry, the pantomime, and even legerdemain and the circus, whose 'side shows' are also well represented. Elsewhere are placed the English and American plays and, with the books relating to other literatures, the works of foreign dramatists, and the histories of their theatres and actors, so that the 'Thr' collection contains but a minor part of the total resources of our Library in the whole field of stage and dramatic history.

There is only sufficient space here to enumerate very briefly the characteristic features of these collections: to describe them adequately would require many pages. The historian of the English stage will find many large 'deposits' from which he may quarry at will. Garrick's life has long been a subject of interest to the Library; made notable originally by Justin Winsor's bequest of the manuscript unpublished life that he had prepared, together with

a large mass of memoranda. The material was increased by systematic purchases of books and prints which included a fine lot of contemporary engraved portraits, showing Garrick in his various roles, later by the Robert H. Lowes library given by John Drew and finally by Mr. Shaw's gift and the Wendell bequest. The Kean collection probably outrivals the Garrick and is almost entirely the result of Mr. Shaw's thoroughgoing efforts; it contains copies of all the portraits owned by the British Museum and a superb series of Kean's letters.

These are samples of what may be found, though to a somewhat smaller degree, for a number of actors, notably Payne, Elliston, Mrs. Siddons, Kemble and others. In many cases, there are diaries, letters, scrapbooks, account books and memorabilia which are already beginning to be used in rewriting and completing the biographies of these players. Harvard has enjoyed the good fortune of a nature that even a long-lived institution can expect but once in a life time, of seeing the amalgamation for its benefit of Mr. Shaw's collection with that of the late Evert J. Wendell; formerly rivals these are now combined under the curatorship of Mr. Shaw, who enjoys the distinction of having given himself as well as his collection to Harvard. The careful treatment and indexing that has already made his material so useful is now being applied to the Evert Wendell and other accessions. A vast harvest awaits the reaper, in these upper chambers of Widener, for here are long series of playbills, including Covent Garden from 1764 to 1838, Drury Lane almost complete, Niblo's, Park Theatre, New York, and, impossible to duplicate, a complete file of Mitchell's Olympic Theatre. In addition there are quantities of early prints and modern photographs, with an unusual series of rare daguerreotypes and small 'carte de visite' portraits, difficult in these days to procure. Furthermore, box on box of autograph letters and memorabilia are waiting as authentic documents to yield their silent facts towards as final a history

of the stage as can be written. Such a mass of documents cannot help but embrace items that stand out preëminent because of their general interest or intrinsic worth; such are a unique copy of the earliest known English playbill, the earliest New York bill, original and genuine copies of the Ford theatre bill of the night of Lincoln's assassination: here are letters from Mrs. Siddons and Nell Gwynn, and, rarest of all theatrical items, letters of John Hodgkinson, an English actor, who came to America and first appeared here in 1793 at the opening of the John Street Theatre in New York.

The Harry Elkins Widener gift has added its notable quota in a few remarkably choice items that otherwise must have always been absent, including the only recorded letter signed by Nell Gwynn and the autograph journal of Kean's visit to America.

Besides the manuscripts already alluded to, further attention should be called to such characteristic items as the Covent Garden account books, manuscript plays by Payne, Richard Cumberland and by minor playwrights, some being as yet unpublished, and with them may be classed the large collection of cheap editions of plays used as prompts by a long list of actors, many well known, with interlinear or interleaved substitutions and additions, valuable in tracing the history of acting versions. Of one minor actor, John Moore, we have some 200 prompt books stuffed with notes and clippings from playbills, giving the casts of his performances. A further and noteworthy feature is the long series of extra-illustrated books, over 400 volumes, pertaining to the stage. Mr. Shaw has never let slip a good opportunity of acquiring these and Mr. Wendell added his quota. They include Ireland's 'Review of the New York Stage' brought together by Augustin Daly, Doran's 'English Stage,' the History of Bartholomew Fair, lives of Macready, Kemble, Cooke, Payne and others, and as a fitting climax the seventy volumes which Mr. Shaw has made up in extending Brander Matthews'

and Laurence Hutton's 'Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States.'

Turning from stage to drama, we find in the Harvard Library a systematically built up collection of plays, with notable gaps it is true, but which has reaped the advantage of all old collections of having gradually drawn in from everywhere food for its maw. The Elizabethan period leaves much to be desired, but the Restoration and the eighteenth century are strong, for here are long series of old quartos and octavos, not alone of the notabilities, but to a marked degree of minor authors. The Wendell library added some 9000 items to the collection of English plays, while the American plays segregated on separate shelves number over 3000 pieces, putting ours well in the forefront of available collections. To Frank E. Chase, '76, of Boston, are due our thanks for having added over 900 pieces to the American play collection. The fund left by Mr. Chase, supplemented by other gifts, has already made possible a marked improvement in our standing as regards seventeenth century English drama.

The foreign drama and stage still remain to be built up, although a good nucleus exists. One collection of books and pamphlets (labelled 'FL') confines itself strictly to the history of the French drama and stage and to biographies of French actors and actresses and contains already some 800 pieces. Another, 'GerL,' contains a fair beginning of a collection of modern German drama. To these resources are added the special Molière collection of over 2000 pieces formed by Professor Bôcher and given by James Hazen Hyde, '98, and in addition there are a few contemporary plays and critical and biographical matter relative thereto shelved with other books relating to French literature. Here are many interesting editions of early authors, in part collected by Professor Bôcher and in part by purchase.

The Spanish drama is represented by a good collection of modern plays, embracing perhaps 6000 pieces, but no

systematic attempt has been made to round it out. Russian drama seems to be well represented, thanks to the forethought and energy of a loyal donor. Let us hope that this country will not long present a closed chapter in the history of the stage. Little systematic work has been done in rounding out the German drama, though a good collection exists of the works of the great authors and of critical apparatus relating thereto. Of the minor literatures bits exist here and there, like the series of old Dutch plays collected by the actor Breedé in the early nineteenth century, while the Yiddish and Slovak collections contain an adequate collection of the dramatic writings of these literatures.

In fact, the Harvard Library has already become the home of the student of the English and American drama and stage. We have already by the generosity of our benefactors been placed in an enviable position, but even in this field a great deal remains to be done to fill existing lacunae, and vigorous measures are necessary to keep abreast of the times. As to the foreign stage the existence of so notable a collection of English dramatic and stage literature invites the desire to see it approached if it can not be equalled for other literatures which have a rich dramatic past, and the presence of a few choice books relating to the Japanese stage makes us desirous of including the Far East with its little known but important contribution to histrionic art. If the fulfillment of these high ideals is far distant or dependent on chance, we should at least build up for each literature a fundamental collection in order that the work of our students may not become provincial by too complete immersion in the literature of a single country, even though that country be as rich in its dramatic glory as England.

## THE CRISPE CHARTERS

The University has recently purchased from A. T. Butler, Esquire, of the College of Arms, the splendid collection of charters and deeds made by the well-known antiquary, Frederick Crispe, Esquire, F. S. A.

This collection consists of more than 800 charters and deeds extending from the middle of the twelfth century through the seventeenth, and they were selected by Mr. Crispe with especial attention to the appended seals, so that, although the collection is small in comparison with the great collections of charters in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the University Library at Cambridge, it enjoys the advantage of being a collection of carefully selected specimens, in which the development of the armorial seal may be traced from its beginning at the close of the twelfth century down through the decay of heraldry in the seventeenth. The charters before 1200 are especially valuable not only to the student of heraldry but also to the historian, the genealogist and topographer.

Among the gems of the collection may be mentioned two seals of Founders of the Garter, the seal of Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library, an exceptionally beautiful armorial seal of a son of the poet Chaucer, several valuable ecclesiastical seals and an early seventeenth century deed of land at Stratford on Avon in which land of William Shakespeare is mentioned.

The collection is of great interest to students of mediaeval manuscripts and is a valuable illustration of the social conditions of mediaeval England. To students of heraldry they should prove invaluable and it is to be hoped that students of architectural schools, by a careful study of them, may avoid blunders. They have been personally examined by Oswald Barron, Esquire, F. S. A., of London, the leading authority in Great Britain upon the heraldry of the Middle Ages and he has pronounced them a most excellent and valuable collection. G. A. M.



BIBL. LONDIN. UNIV.